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ABSTRACT

This lesson plan presents activities designed to enrich students' understanding of a literary work through careful reading and analysis of selected key scenes; to have students recognize how arts media can be integrated into literature studies; to acquaint students with masterpieces of world art; and to reinforce learning through the use of technology, specifically through searches of selected Internet sites. The main activity of the lesson involves students working in teams to pair a great work of art with a great work of literature. It includes objectives, materials, procedures, adaptations, discussion questions, evaluation methods, extension activities, suggested readings, and web links. The lesson plan also contains student handouts and an 11-item gallery of works of art. (RS)

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Great Books, Great Art

Grade Level	9-12
Subject Area	literature, the arts
Curriculum Focus	literature, reading, art
Duration	five one-hour classes

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Objective

1. To enrich students' understanding of a literary work through careful reading and analysis of selected key scenes
2. To have students recognize how arts media can be integrated into literature studies
3. To acquaint students with masterpieces of world art
4. To reinforce learning through the use of technology, specifically through searches of selected Internet sites

Materials

copies of literary text or texts read by all students; composition paper and Xeroxed copies of student handouts, which accompany this activity; thesauruses and dictionaries; computers with Internet access; Discovery Channel School art gallery; *optional, but very effective for a final presentation to class: a Galaxy or similar projector that would allow students to download and present their chosen works of art on a large screen for the entire class

Procedure

Artistic creativity is expressed in various ways. An author uses the written language while an artist uses visual language. Either is capable of presenting complex, powerful, and intense ideas. This activity is designed to encourage students to see the connections between these creative forms.

Print out the student handouts. The students begin with an examination of a work of literature they have just completed reading; while a novel best suits this activity, another genre can be used. The activity may be used so that all students work with the same book or each group works with a different book. It may also be used as a final independent project for individual portfolios.

For a class activity, begin by dividing the class into groups of four or five students. Each group will be a publishing team and will collaborate to compile a great book/great art product. The fact that all students are working with the same literary text should not affect originality and diversity of choices.

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This activity relies heavily on the use of computers with Internet access so be sure to set aside ample browsing time for groups to visit the gallery. The browsing is time-consuming but vital to the activity. You could limit the activity to American painters or painters of the 20th century, for example, or require at least one work of art to be a creation of the culture and the time period in which the book was written.

An alternative to the Internet browsing is to have students do this activity through library research. Instead of working with computers, they could find in art books the samples that are mentioned and provided on the Web site. They could also find their companion pieces to the literary work by perusing art books. Sharing the final products would require the small groups to provide pictures of the works of art they've selected.

For grading this assignment, teachers can take advantage of some logical points at which they can monitor progress and assess work: at the completion of Phase IA; at the completion of Phase IB; and at the completion of the final product, Phase IID. A suggestion for weighting of parts would be 20 percent for Phase IA, 40 percent for Phase IB, and 40 percent for the final product IID.

Extension

After sharing results of the activity, students may be led into a discussion of what constitutes a great book and what constitutes great art. If they have not engaged in a discussion of this nature about the book they have read, encourage them to do so. They could also be encouraged to gather more information about some of the painters whose works they chose and discover why they hold positions of prominence in the art world.

Related Links

Louvre Museum
Mark Harden's Artchive
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
National Museum of American Art

Credits

Our thanks to Alisa Soderquist, an English teacher at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia.

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Great Books, Great Art
The Publishing Project

Discovery Channel SCHOOL

Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci

A major book publisher is creating a new series of great books that will be presented with companion pieces of great art. You and your classmates have been hired to produce one of these great books/great art projects for a work you have read in class.

Phase I: The Great Book

A. Select what you and your group members consider to be the **five key scenes** in the book. For each scene you have chosen, write a short (approximately 25-word) rationale for why this scene is **critical** to the book as a whole.

B. Analyze each scene you have chosen in the following way:

1. Determine what the **major focus** of the scene is. For example, is it plot development, character, or setting?
2. Identify **dominant sensory images** in the scene-that is, those descriptions that appeal to the senses; make sure to note **key visual elements.**
3. Describe the **mood or tone** of the scene. Choose two or three **vivid adjectives** to describe the mood; do not merely say sad but aim for precision in word choice, perhaps *heart-wrenching* or *melancholy* or *bittersweet* or *wistful* or *despairing*. Include adjectives that reveal activity, sounds, and smells also, not merely emotion. Use a thesaurus and dictionary in your work to help you.
4. Select directly from the text five to ten **key words** that your group feels embody the gist of the scene.
5. Select three or four **colors** that you feel reflect the overall tone and mood of the scene; the colors need not be mentioned in the text.

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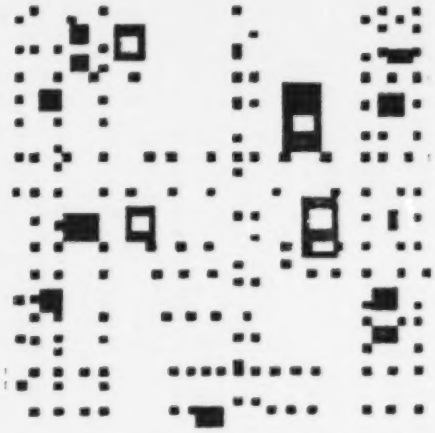
Phase II: The Great Art

In very general terms, art can be divided into two major types: representational art, or art that attempts to re-create faithfully the images found in the world around us; and abstract art, or art that attempts to get to the essence of the world around us but does not necessarily attempt to imitate its images.



Broadway Boogie Woogie by Mondrian

A. For example, an artist might wish to express a scene of vitality and movement in an urban area. Look at the two examples provided for you in the Discovery School Web site art gallery (http://discoveryschool.com/spring99/activities/greatbooksgreatart/gallery.html). A representational artist might paint a bustling street scene such as George Bellows' *Cliff Dwellers* (from NMAA). An abstract artist might, on the other hand, aim for the spirit and feeling of vitality though the use of color and form, as in Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (from MOMA). Both works are very effective in conveying the same idea through different styles.

B. While you're in the art gallery, examine the following sample works of art, including a spectrum of representational and abstract pieces on a variety of themes:

Guernica by Picasso, with a theme of war; *The Scream* by Edvard Munch, with a theme of fear and isolation; *The Boating Party* by Mary Cassatt, with a family theme; *The K'ang-hsi Emperor's Second Tour of the South* by Wang Hui, or *Emigrants Crossing the Plains*, by Albert Bierstadt, both with landscape themes; *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci, or *Paul Revere* by John Singleton Copley, with portrait themes; *The Return of Ulysses* by Romare Bearden or *The Figure 5 in Gold* by Charles Demuth, with literary themes.

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Paul Revere by John Singleton Copley

The Scream by Edvard Munch

C. Now go to some of the other links we've provided for you (http://discoveryschool.com/spring99/activities/greatbooksgreatart/links.html) and browse the various collections of paintings. Using as your guide the analyses (Phase I) you have done on the critical scenes from the piece of literature you're working with, find one companion piece of great art to complement each scene your group has selected. Try to include both representational and abstract art in your final product. Be open-minded; stretch your imagination, but remember to be guided by the gist of each scene.

D. Finally, prepare for your publisher a list that includes the titles and artists for each work you have chosen to correspond to the key scenes in the great book. In a short statement, give the reason for each choice.

E. Share your finished product with other groups in the class.

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The Cliff Dwellers
By George Bellows, 1913
Oil on canvas
40 1/4 x 42 1/8 in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

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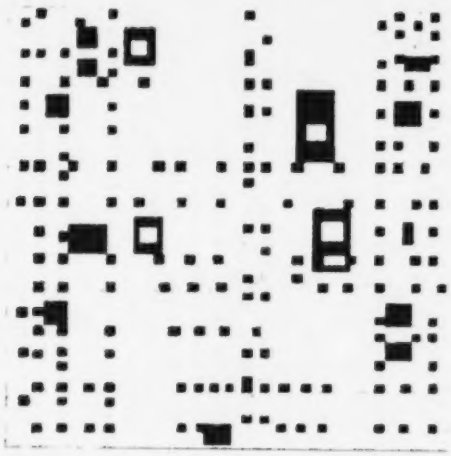

Broadway Boogie Woogie
By Piet Mondrian, 1942-1943
Oil on canvas
50 x 50 in.

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Guernica
By Pablo Picasso, 1937
Oil on canvas
349.3 x 776.6 cm
Museo de la Reina Sofia, Madrid

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The Scream
By Edvard Munch, 1893
Oil, tempera and pastel on cardboard
91 x 73.5 cm
National Gallery, Oslo

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The Boating Party
By Mary Cassatt, 1893-94
Oil on canvas
90.2 x 117.5 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

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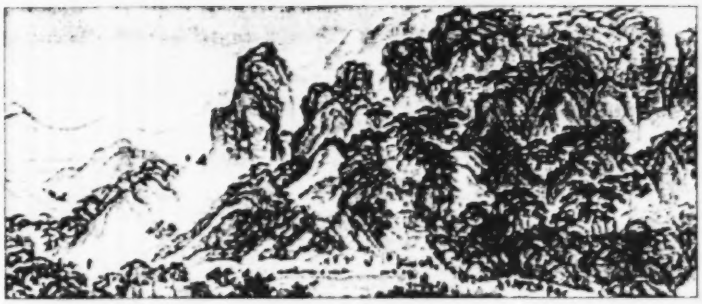

The K'ang-hsi Emperor's Second Tour of the South
By Wang Hui, 1632-1717
Ink and colors on silk
2 ft. 2 5/8 in. x 45 ft. 8 1/2 in.

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Emigrants Crossing the Plains
By Albert Bierstadt, 1867
Oil on canvas
67 x 102 in.
National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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Mona Lisa
By Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1502
Oil on wood
77 x 53 cm
Louvre, Paris

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Paul Revere
By John Singleton Copley, c. 1768-70
Oil on canvas
35 x 28 1/2 in.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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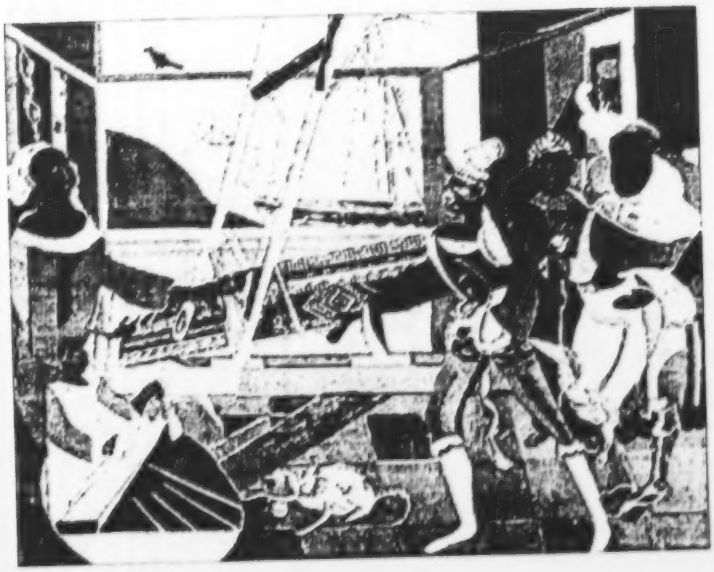

The Return of Ulysses
By Romare Bearden, 1976
serigraph on paper
18 1/2 x 22 1/2 in.

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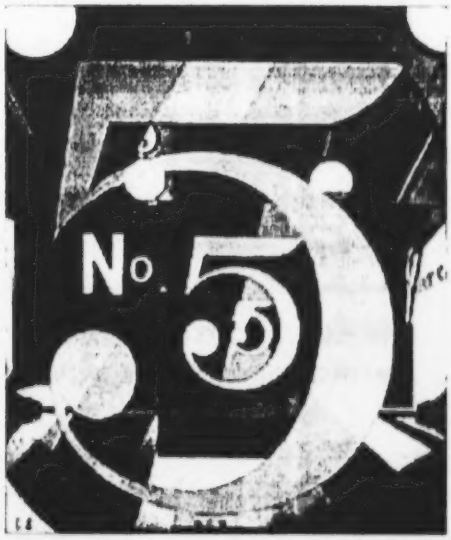

The Figure 5 in Gold
By Charles Demuth, 1928
Oil on composition board
36 x 29 3/4 in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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